IN THE CLAIMS:

1-2. (Cancel)

3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) The dental apparatus~~A treatment element~~ as defined in claim ~~1~~27, wherein ~~at least~~ said first top module includes a control panel.

5. (Cancel)

6.-10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) The dental apparatus~~A treatment element~~ as defined in claim ~~1~~27, including an instrument removal detector which can be converted from a state for the detection of instruments having hanging instrument hoses to a state for the detection of instruments having swivel-arm hose supports.

12. (Currently Amended) The dental apparatus~~A treatment element~~ as defined in claim 11, wherein said instrument removal detector can be displaced from said base module to said top modules.

13. (Currently Amended) The dental apparatus~~A treatment element~~ as defined in claim 11, wherein a single instrument removal detector is provided on the base module for use with said first and second top modules.

14. (Currently Amended) The dental apparatus~~A treatment element~~ as defined in claim ~~1~~27, wherein said first top module has a frame member and an insert.

15. (Previously Presented) A treatment element for the accommodation of dental hand instruments, comprising a base module having connectors for the supply of media to the instruments, plurality of top modules including instrument holders, said top modules being interchangeable so that the treatment element can, by changing the top module, be converted from a type of apparatus having hanging instrument hoses into a whip-arm hose support type of apparatus, and a coupling bar mounted on an underside of the base module, said coupling bar including couplings for instrument hoses, said coupling bar being changeably mounted to the base module from a position for the attachment of a hanging instrument hose to a position for the attachment of a hose from in front.

16. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, wherein said top modules can be releasably connected to said base module by hand.

17. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, wherein one of said top modules is equipped with a control panel.

18. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, wherein one of said top modules is equipped with an instrument holder.

19. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 18, wherein said top module and said instrument holder accommodate instruments having hanging instrument hoses.

20. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 19, wherein said top module has a flat receptacle and the instrument holder has docking bays for holding instruments.

21. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, wherein said top module and said instrument holder guide the instrument hoses over the treatment element.

22. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 21, wherein on the top module there are mounted swivel arms or whip arms and the instrument holder has troughs for the accommodation of the instruments.

23. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, including an instrument removal detector which can be converted from a state for the detection of instruments having hanging instrument hoses to a state for the detection of instruments having swivel-arm or whip-arm hose supports.

24. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 23, wherein said instrument removal detector can be displaced from said base module to said top module.

25. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 23, wherein a single instrument removal detector is provided on the base module for use with both types of apparatus.

26. (Currently Amended) The~~A~~ treatment element as defined in claim 15, wherein said top module has a frame member and an insert .

27. (New) A dental apparatus which comprises:

a base module which defines a top surface, a bottom surface and a front end,

a first top module which is positionable on the top surface of said base module and which defines a flat top surface and a front end which includes a plurality of spaced projections defining hose channels therebetween,

a first instrument holder which is positionable on the front end of the first top module and which defines a plurality of docking bays that are in register with said hose channels,

a second top module which is positionable on the top surface of said base module and which includes a plurality of swivel-arm hose supports,

a second instrument holder which is positionable on the front end of the second top module and provides a plurality of spaced troughs for supporting respective dental instruments,

a coupling bar mounted on the bottom surface of the base module and which provides a row of media supply couplings, the coupling bar being oriented such that the media supply couplings extend either downwardly relative to the base module or forwardly relative to the base module, and

a plurality of hoses which are respectively connected at first ends to said media supply couplings and at opposite second ends mount respective dental instruments, said coupling bar being oriented so that the media supply couplings will extend downwardly when said first top module with said first instrument holder thereon is positioned on said first top module, and oriented so that the media supply couplings will extend forwardly relative to the base module when the second top module with second instrument holder thereon is positioned on the base module.